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OLD RELICS IN KAMRUP.

By

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OLD RELICS IN KAMRUP.

I.

One of the beautiful places which have been made easily accessible to the Calcutta people, by means of railways and steamers, is Assam. Though it is not yet as largely crowded by holiday tourists as the North-West Provinces, it will certainly draw a large portion of them when the country is better known. Assam is more salubrious than Lower Bengal, though not quite as healthy as some of the stations in the North West ; but it far surpasses the alluvial plains of the Ganges in beautiful scenery. To one who delights in the loveliness of Nature, Assam will always have some attraction, and a change from the plains of the Ganges to the valley of the Brahmaputra will be pleasant. As soon as one reaches Jatrapur on the Brahmaputra, on his way from Calcutta, he perceives the change. At this place he exchanges his railway carriage for the steamer which steams up the river that sweeps in "regal pride" through the whole length of the valley. The loneliness of the river, if we may so call it, for there are few steamers or boats plying about, and the uninhabited banks, prepare the mind for contemplation. Near Dhubri the hills become just visible, and from Goalpara the Assam scenery may be said to begin. The town of Goalpara, or at least the European quarter of it, is situated on a lovely hill which rises abruptly from the river ; and just after leaving Goalpara the scenery becomes exceedingly beautiful. Here the river appears to be surrounded on all sides with wooded hills which are reflected on the quiet mirror-like water, giving altogether an appearance of an inland lake. But however one may like to linger a little in order to feast his eyes for a while with the levelness of Nature with which he

finds himself here surrounded, the inexorable steam-boat hurries past the fairy scene. However, the impression which one receives of this place will last long in his memory, and will very often come to relieve his mind weary with the work and worry of life in Calcutta ! After this place, the scene becomes rather tame till the neighbourhood of Gouhati is reached. Here again the quiet mirror-like Brahmaputra assumes the appearance of a lake, hemmed in by green undulating hills. The course of the river at this place is necessarily very tortuous, winding along the hills which flank its sides, and every turn discloses some fresh beauty with which the eye is never tired. Hills, dales, woods, the lake-like river, sandbanks and wooded islands make the scene bewitching.

The town of Gouhati is situated on both sides of the river, and appears to be surrounded with waving hills which can be seen as far as the eye can reach. The place is one of exceeding beauty ; and had it been in Europe, a picturesque little town, dotted with neat little houses, would have cheered the eye of the traveller, but in India the people are too poor and too low in the scale of civilization to take advantage of lovely sites for building picturesque towns.

Northern India has been the scene of many a war and conquest, of the rise and fall of many a powerful kingdom and empire. It is replete with the memory of the great events of our history, and is strewn with the fragments of splendid palaces and temples. There the historian and the archaeologist revel amidst the plentiful materials for their study. Comparatively secluded from the great arena of our struggle, Assam cannot rival the sister provinces in the richness of her history and antiquities. Nevertheless the valley has its own annals and ruins which are neither uninteresting nor undeserving of notice. Here too, as everywhere else in the world, there have been wars and conquests, rise and fall of kingdoms and nations, and struggle for supremacy and existence. Man's nature is the same every

where, the arena of his action may be large or small in different places.

It may be said at the outset that however much a tourist may be disposed to enquire into the past history of the place he visits, he may not have the means at his disposal to complete his enquiry. In the first place his stay is generally short, and then if he has come to enjoy a little rest and have a change from the work and worry to which he is doomed, he can ill afford to undertake a study which requires both work and labour. Again he has no access to books which he needs refer to, and when such books are consulted on his return home, he generally finds that the notes he had taken are much too incomplete, and that he could have better utilized his opportunity if he had studied his subject before he went to visit the place. In these circumstances his enquiry cannot but be superficial, and the information collected by him, a suggestion to specialists and men with more time and study to take up the work. It is with this view that we note down a short account of the historical and antiquarian remains which may be seen in the district of Kamrup.

II.

According to the Brahmanas, the name 'Asam,' now given to the valley of the Brahmaputra, is derived from the Sanskrit word *Asama* or uneven, on account of the hilly aspect of the country. This derivation is no doubt ingenious and may be correct, but there is no evidence to establish it. In the time of Hiuen Tsiang, East Bengal was known by the name of *Samatata* or even. Here the name of the country was derived from the nature of its surface ; and though there is nothing unreasonable in supposing a similar derivation of the name of the neighbouring hilly country, we do not find any mention in Hiuen Tsiang's work of the valley being known as '*Asama*'. European scholars, on the other hand, derive the name from the Ahoms or Asoms, an eastern tribe who conquered the

country and settled in it. This derivation, though not unlikely, has as little evidence to support it as the other. Whatever the derivation of the name may be, in the annals of Assam, Kamrup occupied an important part. It was something of an outlying district, a sort of Ireland, which the royalty seldom visited, but which was governed by a viceroy under the title of Bar Phukan as popularly called, or Vrihat Phukkana as styled in local inscriptions. But long before Assam was civilized, Kamrup had been a flourishing Hindu kingdom, and its capital Gouhati was known in ancient time as Pragyatishapura. This old kingdom occupied not only the present district, but a large portion of what is now included in Bengal, comprising Rungpur and a part of Bogra and of Cooch Behar, and probably a portion of Mymensing and Sylhet. Its tradition runs back to the time of the ~~Mahabharata~~. It is said that Bhagadatta the then reigning king of Kamrup took part in the war of the Mahabharata on the side of Duryodhana. Hiudus have never been known for their love of history and we must therefore remain content with such legendary and fragmentary anecdotes, and with such curious account as may be found in the Yogini Tantra. It is not a little humiliating to us, that the only authentic and important, though necessarily short history of the country that is available, is to be had from the writings of a foreigner. The intelligent Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang has given interesting accounts of the people and the country as they existed at the time of his visit. It would be out of place here to quote from them, but they may be read in Beal's translation. It may however be stated that at the time of that great traveller, Kamrup was a powerful kingdom, though acknowledging the suzerainty of the great king Siladitya of Kanouj. Hiuen Tsiang was being entertained by the king of Kamrup at Nalanda when the latter, Bhashkara Varman, familiarly known as Kumararaja, received an invitation from Siladitya who was then at Kajinghara, on the banks of the

Ganges, to join an imperial religious celebration. Bhashkara Varman, as directed by Siladitya, took Hiuen Tsiang with him, and met Siladitya, and proceeded with him as far as Kanouj where the great celebration took place. The following extract which we make from the account of the Chinese traveller (Beal's translation) will show that Bhashkara Varman was by no means an insignificant potentate. "Siladitya-raja being about to return to the city of Kanyakubja, convoked a religious assembly. Followed by several hundreds of thousand people, he took his place on the southern bank of the river Ganges' whilst Kumara-raja, attended by several tens of thousands, took his place on the northern bank, and thus, divided by the stream of the river, they advanced on land and water. The two kings led the way with their gorgeous staff of soldiers (*of four kinds*); some also were in boats; some were on elephants, sounding drums and blowing horns, playing on flutes and harps. After ninety days they arrived at the city of Kanyakubja, (*and rested*) on the western shore of the Ganges river in the middle of a flowery copse."

No remains, however, of these remote periods can now be traced. Coming to a more modern epoch, we find that for a long time Kamrup formed a part of the dominion of the neighbouring chiefs of Bengal. Subsequently it was part of a district held by the Mahomedans; but after the defeat of Mir Jumla, a general of Aurungzebe, in his attempt to subdue Asam, the whole of Kamrup was wrenched from them by the Asamese; and they retained it till it was overrun by the Burmese and finally annexed by the British. With these few remarks, as regards the history of the district, we will now proceed to note down some of the objects of antiquarian interest which may be found in it.

III.

We have said that the town of Gouhati is situated on both sides of the Brahmaputra. We will begin our account from

the southern side. The principal object of interest here, and the oldest relic of the past, is the temple of Kamakhya, situated about three miles west of the town and on a hill called the Nilachala. It is one of the highest in the district, being about a thousand feet above the sea level. This temple is reached by four roads of which the one leading from the river is the most beautiful ; but the most important one seems to be the one which leads from the Asam Trunk road. This road is approached by a ruined gateway just at the foot of the hill. The whole way up to the height of about 800 feet is rudely paved with large boulders. A little way up from the foot of the hill one meets a rough figure of a *deitya* carved on a rock. It is that of Nareka, who according to tradition, though an Asura, was appointed by the gods as the first guardian of the Kamakhya temple. The road terminates in another ruined gateway which leads to the level on which the temple is situated. The architecture of the temple is not very striking, the base being made of stone, and the upper portion made of bricks with stone figures stuck here and there. This temple was constructed some time after the Christian era, and was originally built of stone, but the ruthless hand of Kalapahar, in about 1553 A.C. nearly razed it to the ground. It was on the stump that was left that the present brick edifice was built. If one were to judge from the ruins that lie scattered about, fragments of pillars capitolis, figures, and blocks of stones smoothed and chiselled, he must conclude that the stone temple, which was first built, was very large and extensive. In one of the gates of the temple there is a huge piece of stone worked into a globular shape which at one time formed a part of the pinnacle of the temple. It shows how massive the temple was. And when we consider that the fragments which are found near the temple are not only of sandstones but also of igneous stones (both kinds are found locally) we can conceive the immense labour that must have been spent in rearing this temple.

The origin of the shrine, as told in the Puranas, is, no doubt, known to all Hindus, and we pass over that story as well as that of the immoral practices which prevailed here in days gone by. Thanks to the British rule, these practices have been suppressed. Inside the temple, it is pitch dark, as is the case with many Hindu temples of note, but there are one or two interesting objects here which need be mentioned. Among the stone figures in the interior will be found two which represent the brother princes named Malladdhaja and Sukladdhaja, and an inscription on stone recording the fact of their having built or rather re-built the temple. The anonymous author of the *Asam Bhraman* copied this inscription and published it in his book from which we reproduce it here:—

লোকান্তরে কারকঃ করণয়া পার্থী ধনুবিদ্যায়া দানেনাপি
দৰীচিকর্ণসদৃশো মর্যাদয়াত্ত্বানিধিঃ । নানাশাস্ত্রবিচার চাকু-
চরিতঃ কন্দপূর্জপোজ্জলঃ কামাখ্যাচরণার্চকো বিজয়তে শ্রীমল
দেবেনৃপঃ ॥ প্রাসাদমদ্বিতুষ্টুচরণারবিদঃ । ভজ্যাকরোভদমুজোবর
নীলশিলে শ্রীশুক্রদেব ইমমুল্লসিতোপলেন শাকে তুরঙ্গজ বেদ
শশাঙ্কসঙ্গে ॥ তটৈব প্রিয়সোদরঃ পৃথুষশাঃ বীরেজ মৌলীশূলী
মাণিক্য ভজমান কল্পিটপী নীলাচলে মঞ্জুলম্ ॥ প্রাসাদম্ মনিনাগ
দেব শশভৃৎ শাকে শিলারাজিভিঃ দেবীভক্তিমতাস্তরো রচিতবান्
শ্রীশুক্রপূর্বক্ষবজঃ

It would appear from the above inscription that the temple was repaired between 1487 and 1489 Saka, or 1565 and 1567 A.C. Other accounts say that it took ten years in rebuilding the temple, *i.e.*, from 1555 to 1565 A.C.

Attached to the temple is a large hall which is called the "dancing hall." It is without any embellishment inside, but there we found two inscriptions, one on stone and the other on a copper plate. We give below the contents of the former as we transcribed them :—

শ্রীরাম

ষষ্ঠি কামাখ্যাচরণসুজার্চণ পরোধর্মেণ ধর্মোপমো রূপেণালিত
পঞ্চায়কমদঃ স্বর্গেশ বংশোন্তব দিক্ চক্র ক্রমণ প্রবীণ বিকসৎ^১
কন্দোল সৎসন্দযশাঃ শ্রীরাজেষ্঵র সিংহ ভূপতি বরো ভূলোকে কল্পন্তুমঃ॥
যো ভূপাল মৌলি রঞ্জ বিলসৎ পাদারবিন্দুবয়োভূসন্মীতিলতৌষ
নৃতনঘনঃ কোদণ্ড বিদ্যার্জুনঃ। পারাবার গভীর উজির্ততরাদিত্য
প্রতাপো মহাদোদ্ধুতিপ্রচণ্ড বৈরি নিহব প্রোক্ষামদাবানঙঃ॥
তস্যাজ্ঞাদধন্দাদেবেণ শিরসি স্বর্গাবরোহাবাধ স্বর্গেশান্বয় ভূপ সেবি
দ্ববরা বংশ্যোত্ত্ব নীলাচলে। কামাখ্যাজ্যু পরায়ণে দশরথঃ
শ্রীযুঁবৃহৎ ফুকনঃ কামাখ্যাত্সব মন্দিরঃ ক্ষিতিবস্তুদেন্দুশাকেহ
করোৎ । ১৬৮১ ॥

From the above it seems that this hall was built by Dasaratha, the Bar Phukan or the viceroy, under the orders of king Rajeshvara Sinha, in the Saka year 1681 or A.C. 1759. The inscription on the copper plate has been kindly copied for us by a friend, it runs as follows :—

ভূপালশ্রেণিমৌলিপ্রকরমধূকরাকীর্ণ পাদারবিন্দঃ কামাখ্যা-
পাদপদ্মার্চনজনিত মহোদীপ্ত শুক্লান্তরাঞ্চা। শ্রীগৌরীনাথসিংহো
নৃপকুলতিলকে। দানকল্পকন্তো বিধ্যাতাগঙ্গলীয়ান্বয়নলিন
কুলোদ্ধামধামাক্তুলঃ॥ কোদণ্ডোজ্জিত রাজদণ্ডলন প্রত্যর্থ
শুক্ষেন্দুনজ্ঞালা জাল করালকালকবলোহ পূর্ব প্রতাপানলঃ। তদ্ব-
মাকুল। বৈরিবৃন্দলনালোলাঞ্ছধারা হবির্দ্ব্যাপাদিত হেতি
কোটিবিল সন্নাস্তেতদীয়ঃ সদা দোদণ্ড প্রবল প্রতাপ নিকর অদীপ্ত
দাবানল দঞ্চানেক বিপক্ষ কক্ষ নিচয়ঃ সংগ্রাম ভীতিপ্রদঃ যন্মাম
শ্রবণাং সহস্রনঘনঃ প্রাপ্তেৰি শক্ষাংজপত্যাঞ্চর্যঃ পরএষ এব
মহতাং বাচ্যঃ কিমন্তোগুণঃ॥ যঃ পিত্রারাজ্যভারোবহননিপুণতাং
বীক্ষ্য রাজ্যে নিযুক্তঃ সাম্রাজ্যনীতিশাস্ত্রামলগহন মতিল্লেৰিকরক্ষা-
প্রবীণঃ। লক্ষ্মীসিংহাথ্যো ভূপতিঃ সহজ গুণনিকরণামবিশ্রামধামা-
ধীরস্তাদুঁড়ুরেঙ্গো নিখিল গুণনিধিৰ্বাস্তিনাসীন্দ্র ভাবী॥ এতস্যে

প্রতাপবহুনিচয়ে স্বামাভিমানোৎকাষ্টস্তাং দ্বিরিবহা যদাস-
লভতাঃ প্রাপ্তাদ্বিষৎ কর্শনা অঙ্গীকৃত্যতদাস লক্ষক বলিঃ দাতুং
সুধীরাগণীঃ কামাখ্যা প্রমোদাংকটায় হৃদয়ং প্রাধাদিষাঃ নাশনে
শাঘাং লক্ষবলিংশুভাস্ম মহতে শ্রীস্বর্গনারায়ণঃ শক্তঃ সাধযিতুং
প্রতিশ্রুতমিদং কোমস্ত্রিনাং মে ভবেৎ ইত্যালোচ্য স্বয়ম্ভু স্বগুরু
নামা ত্যে নচে বাদী শব্দারা বংশ সম্মুবংস্ববিভবং শ্রীযুক্ত
ফুকণং গান্তীর্ঘীদার্য্যধৈর্য্যজিতজলধি রঘং পালিতাশেষ
লোকো ভেদাদ্যৈর্বেদ সংখ্যেরতিশয় বলিভিত্তে রূপায়ে রক্ষতঃ
শৌর্যসংগ্রামযজ্ঞেহজ্জনইব রিপুজিৎ কৌর্তিতাতুল্য কৌর্তিন্নেদৃক
সংদৃশ্যমানো নৃপুর সচিব পূর্বং ন পশ্চাতং ॥ প্রথ্যাতেহববাস্তলে
ক্ষিতিতলে জাতো মহাধার্মিকঃ শ্রীগান শ্রীবড় ফুকণোহর পুরোঃ
নাথাভিধানঃ কৌর্তি আকজ্ঞাতিঃ পুরমেতু ছাগ মহিষেঃ পারাবতা
দৈর্য্যবলিঃ দেবৈ লক্ষ্মিতঃ বিবিচ্যাহিত হৃদজ্ঞে নৃপাঙ্গীকৃতঃ
লোকামুগ্রহতং পরা মন মতিন্নেতা প্রজানাঃ সদাকামাখ্যাঃ সততঃ
নিধায় হৃদয়ে নিত্যাঃ সুরৈঃ দেবিতাঃ বর্ণকাশমণিঙ্গপাকরমিতে
শাকে শুভে হৃদং সদা প্রথা নদীনং সলক্ষক বলিঃ প্রাদাপয়ৎ
ফুকণঃ । (স্ব : ৭০৪) ।

It appears from the above that king Lakshmi Sinha whom his father king Gourinath appointed his successor, vowed to offer a sacrifice of one hundred thousand animals before the shrine of Kamakhya, in order to subdue his enemies. He appointed the Vrihata Phakkuna to carry out his vow, and the inscription testifies that one hundred thousand animals consisting of goat, sheep, buffalo, and pigeon were sacrificed. It was in the saka year 1704.

Hard by the temple there is a tank fed by a spring, it has an outlet also for its water, nevertheless the water is as dirty as can be imagined. It is called the tank of "good fortune" in which pilgrims seeking the smiles of fortune are expected to bathe. The sides of the tank are high, and brilt up with

stones. There are one or two more similar tanks on this hill, but none of them are of equal repute.

Near the Kamakhya temple there is one dedicated to Kali. It is built of burnt bricks, beautifully carved and tastefully arranged. It is said that the bricks were brought all the way from Moorshedabad. There are also several other small temples, now disused and fast falling into ruins, which are hardly worth describing.

IV.

Leaving Kamakhya temple behind, and going further up for about 200 feet, one comes to the summit of the Nilachala hill. It is a lovely, small, sequestered place of great beauty. Down below can be seen the Brahmaputra, a quiet, tiny, winding stream, while the more distant view of waving hills and beauteous valleys, of quiet meadows and shaded town is a picture indeed. Far from the busy haunts of men and remote from the bustle of life, this lovely spot on the top of the hill forms a quiet retreat where one may pass hours together without feeling tired. If he is a poet, this is the place to court the muse, if he is a philosopher, this is the spot for meditation, if he appreciates the beauty of nature, this is the place where he can feast his eye and mind, if he is a religious man, this is the shrine where he can invoke the Great Creator ! But to what purpose did man use this sacred spot ? Here a temple has been built to goddess Bhuvaneshvari, and, according to tradition, it was before this dread goddess that human sacrifices were offered ! Such was the state to which religion was debased through priestly craft and natural degeneracy. Thanks to the British rule, the dark days of human sacrifice are over, but the memory of what took place haunts the spot yet. Few venture to loiter there after evening, and hardly a lamp illuminates the darkness of the night. When we visited the place, one solitary yogi was living there. At day time the spire of the temple, which is after all a humble structure, devoid of

architectural beauty and ornament, is seen from many a mile afar. Kamrup, it appears, was the very centre of the tantric cult, and that perhaps explains the rites which were performed in Kamakhya and Bhubaneshwari temples.

A tourist who has come to the Nilachala hill, may as well proceed two miles further west by the Assam Trunk Road and see the temple of Pandunath. But before he reaches this temple his attention will be arrested by an inscription on a piece of rock by the road side near the fourth milestone. It is just at the foot of the hill, almost hid by shrubs, and one, at first sight, is apt to wonder what business it had to be there. But his curiosity will be satisfied on reading the inscription which we give below :—

স্বষ্টি শ্রীহরগৌরী পদারবিন্দ মকরন্দ সন্দোহবিলীনমাল-
মধুকর প্রবর মথামান বনীয়ক পরম করুণা বরুণা লঘস্য স্বভ
যশোকাশ মণিতা শেষামেদিনীমণ্ডলস্ত বাসব বংশাবতংস শ্রীশ্রীমৎ
শিবসিংহ ভূপালকস্ত নিদেশতঃ তদীয় সেনাপতি বর সকল সংসার
মঙ্গলাগার হর কৈলাশ কাশ কার্পাস হিণ্ডীর পিণ্ড দুঃখ শুভ কৌর্ত্তিমণ্ডল
মণিতাশেষদিকদিগন্তরালেন শ্রীকেশব পদ পক্ষজ ভূজবরেন শ্রীমতি
হিঞ্চির বড়কুকনেগ প্রাকজ্যোতিঃ পূর প্রত্যেক দ্বার মৃংশিলেষ্টকাদি
নির্মিতয়া প্রতোল্যাদ্বীপঞ্চাশদধিকশত ধনুমিত পুরী দ্বিবিংশত্যাধিক
দ্বিশত ধনুমিত পরিখাদিভিরলক্ষ্যতঃ মাসিত বেদ বিশিথ বেদাঙ
শশধর শাকে । ১৬৫৪ ।

It will be seen from the above, that the stone commemorates the building of the city gate at this place. It was built under the orders of king Siva Sinha, by the commander of his forces, the Bar Phukan, of the family of Bihinga, in the Saka year 1654 or A. C. 1732. The measurement of the gate and the attached building is given at 152 Dhanu or 304 yards, a dhanu being equal to two yards. The measurement of a moat with which the gate appears to have been strengthened is given at

222 dhanu or 444 yards. Nothing now remains of this gate. About twenty-five years ago its ruins encumbered the ground, and it is said that the Public Works Department removed the ruins to clear all obstruction on what is now called the Asam Trunk Road. Surely the road might have been diverted a little and the ruins of this old gate permitted to exist. Some traces of the moat may yet be seen in the deep depression on the side of the hill to the south of the road.

Now we can proceed to the temple of Pandunath which is situated just at the foot of the Nilachala hill and on the banks of the Brahmaputra. The situation is beautiful, but the temple itself is a miserable thing, built of brick and thatched. It is dedicated to Vishnu. There are however some beautiful pieces of sculptured stone, formed into steps, which are well worth preserving. The chief point of interest relating to this temple is the tradition that the five Pandavas raised a temple here just before they finally retired from the world.

V.

We will now return from Pandunath to Gouhati where we may notice three small temples. The first one is that of Sukreshvara, dedicated to Mahadeva. It is a brick built edifice situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra. There are some small sculptured slabs of stone stuck on the walls of the building in one of which we noticed the folding drapery of a figure finely executed. It is worth preserving. Just below the temple, on the steep bank of the river, is a large figure of Vishnu cut in solid rock which forms the bank. The figure is named Janardana. It is seated much after the fashion of Buddha, and the features also have some resemblance to those of Buddha. But there can be no mistake about the identity of the god, as he is represented with four arms and holding in his four hands, one of which is broken, the symbols of Vishnu, viz:—the *Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Gada*, and *Padma*.

The second temple we propose to notice is that of the

goddess Ugratara. The edifice is very simple, but the inscription found in it is worth reproducing. We give it below :—

৮৭ স্বতি সমগ্রাভিরামনিকামমহোদ্দামগুণগ্রামবিশ্রামধার
কামাভিরাম হরিহরাকার ক্ষার দুর্বারবশঃ প্রাণ্তার নির্জিত সুখাসাৰ
হৃষ্পারসংসারপারাবারসন্তারচতুরচরণতরণীতারিণীচরণ চারণ সম-
ক্ষাধিকর্তন বিজিত হৱপ্রততপ্রতাপপ্রকরপ্রধন্ত সমস্তসমর্থপ্রত্যধি
পার্থিব সার্থক মিশ্র প্রত্যন্ত মানপ্রধানদানসন্তান কল্পায়মানমানধন
মহেন্দ্রবংশাবতংশ শ্রীশ্রীমৎ স্বর্গদেব শিবসিংহ ভূপুরন্দৱাগাঃ চাক্ষ
চরণ স্বষ্টি' শ্রীপঞ্চ' ভৃঙ্গায়মাণ প্রধান মহামাত্য মহিত নীতিক্রম
নিঃসীম ভীম বিক্রম গুণিগণ মণিত পণিত খণিতা খিল বিপক্ষ
পক্ষঃ স্বর্গগমনাবধি স্বর্গবংশ নৃপেশ সেবি বংশাবধি সুখাকৰ
শ্রীযুতামুজ দ্বারা বৃহৎ ফুকনস্তান্নরেন্দ্রনিদেশতঃ শ্রীশ্রীমহগুভারা
দেব্যাঃ প্রসাদামিমংব্যরচয়ৎ মুনিবেদস্বাদেন্দু শাকে । ১৬৪৭ ।

We learn from the above that the temple was built by the Bar Phukan in the reign of Siva Sinha, in the Saka year 1647, A.C. 1725. There is a tank attached to the temple which was excavated about thirteen years after the temple was built. There is an inscription set up in its side which we reproduce below

শ্রীশ্রীদুর্গা ।

৮৭ স্বতি গোকাণমার্ত্তগুপ্তচণ্ডপ্রতাপমগুলাথগুল বংশাবতংস
সকল ভূপালমৌলিমাণালোলিতপাদ পুন্নবলীরদমন্দচন্দ্ৰ সুন্দৰ
কীর্তি নিকৰহরণোৱী পদাৰবিন্দমকৰন্দমধুকৰ শ্রীশ্রীস্বর্গনারায়ণ
শিবসিংহ দেবঃ তদীয় প্ৰিয়পত্নী শ্রীশ্রীকৃলেখৰী দেবী প্ৰিয় সেবক
শ্রীযুদ্ধিহিনীয় বৃহৎফুকনঃ প্রাগঝোতিষ্পুর শ্রীমৰূপতা দেবী সমীপে
জীৰ্ণাংপুক্তরিণীঝৰান স্বর্গমনলৱৱসলগিশাকে । ১৬৬০ ।

The third temple in the town is that of Chhatrakar, built on a slight elevation. There are two inscriptions on it, but the copy which we took of them has been so much injured that they cannot be published. The temple was built in the regin of Kamaleshvara Sinha.

The plan on which almost all the temples in this district are buiit, is extremely simple. The principal portion is a circular or nearly circular edifice which towers high over the other portions of the building and generally ends in a spire. It is within this structure that the deity, to which the temple is dedicated, is placed. The room is pitch dark having no opening to admit light from outside : and is illuminated with lamps that make darkness visible, and dimly show the gods to the votaries. In front of this circular room, and attache1 to it, is a large hall where the votaries assemble to pay their devotion. The temples are generally built of small well-burnt flat bricks, small and unimposing. The arches are nearly seacircular, and mainly held by a final keystone at the top. This "key" is also a well burnt flat brick almost an equilateral triangle in shape. The entrance to the temple is generally a long covered vault formed on the principle of the arch, described above, in fact it is a succession of arches one behind the other. This is, in short, the general style of architecture in the existing old temples of Kamrup. Most of them were built after the middle of the seventeenth century when the rajas of Asam had adopted the Hindu religion.

VI.

THE Planets have from a remote antiquity been supposed to influence the destiny of man, and their visible movements in the sky soon secured to them places among heavenly beings, and thus they received homage from the poor mortals of the earth. Though they are very often worshipped in private, there are very few public temples in India dedicated to them.

It was therefore with some curiosity that we went to visit one fine evening, the temple of NavaGraha, or the nine planets, about two miles east of Gauhati. The temple itself is a very humble structure, built of bricks, on an elevation of about 400 feet. Nine cylindrical stones are arranged in three rows of three each, representing the seven planets and the sun and the moon. There is no roof over the room in which the planets are placed. It is said that a thatched roof is constructed every year, and every year it is burnt down because of the evil influence of the planet Saturn, the good influence of the other planets failing to prevent the mischief. There appears to be a touch of reality in this anecdote! Do not we find in this world, evil predominating over good? Our readers will remember that Gauhati was the ancient Prag jyotishapura, the name may be translated as the "Eastern city of astronomy"; and one hearing of a temple of the planets in such a city is apt to conclude that it must be an astronomical edifice. It was with this belief that we visited the temple, but we found no indication to show that the temple was anything of an observatory. If the temple was ever used for any such purpose, all traces of it have disappeared.

We give below a copy of the inscription which we found in the temple :

শ্রীরামঃ ।

ষ্ট স্বত্ত্ব অরহর চরণ চারণ বৈরি বারণ দারণ পঞ্চানন গ্রতাপ
তপন নৃপনিকরশিরোরত্ননীতিরত্নরত্নাকর শশধর প্রবরযশোধরবাসর
বৎশাৰতৎশ শ্রীশ্রীমৎ স্বর্গনারায়ণ রাজেশ্বরসিংহনরেখৰাণামা-
দেশতত্ত্বস্থিতিপ্রবৰ প্রাগজ্যোতিঃপুরাশেৰ মেনানায়ক যশোজ্জিত
সুধাকৃতারাতিতিমিৰ মিহিৰ স্বর্গাবতারাবধি স্বর্গনরেশসেবিবৎশ
বদ্ধুষণ শ্রীমতক্ষণ্ঠবৰা বৃহৎকুকুনো বিচিত্ চিত্রাচলালয়ঃ

নবগ্রহাভ্যুকৎ শিরোপরি নবরত্নাখ্যং বৃহস্পতিময়চৌকরদ্বেদাদ্বিরসেন্দ্ৰ
শাকে ॥ ১৬৭৪ ॥ ০ ॥

Here we see that the temple was built in the Saka era 1674, or A. C. 1749, under the orders of king Rajeshvara Sinha, by the commander of his army, the Bar Pukhan, Taruna Duvara.

Descending from the hill on which the temple is situated, and going a little to the south, we saw a small circular tank excavated in connection with the temple of the planets, a year after it was built, as the following inscription on a stone set up near the tank would show :—

শ্রীরামঃ ।

৩৭ স্বত্তি প্রচণ্ডকোদণ্ডকাণ্ডমদণ্ডশিতপ্রকাণ্ডারিমুণ্ড মণ্ডলী
মণ্ডিতভূধণ্ডুখণ্ডপ্রবলষশোজ্জিতস্থুধাধাম কামাভিরামধামাধি-
পাধিকধামস্তুগ্রামগোতামন্দসিঙ্গু শশধর নৃপনিকরশিরোদাম শ্রীশ্রীমৎ
স্বর্গদেব রাজেশ্বর সিংহ নরেশ্বরাণঃ চরণ পুষ্টর মধুকর মন্ত্র প্রবৰ
ষশোজ্জিত শারদশশধর নিজবীর্যনির্জিত রিপুনিকর স্বর্গনৃপবর্গ-
সেবি বেশ বিভূত্যণ শ্রীযুৎ তরুগদ্বয়া বৃহৎ ফুকনেন গ্রহাশয়াখা
গুক্ষরিণীরমথানি বাণাদ্বিরসেন্দ্ৰ শাকে ॥ ১৬৭৫ ।

To one accustomed to the level plains of Bengal, an excursion in the Kamrup district is exceedingly pleasant. Wherever he goes, he sees all around him, green waving hills and delightful valleys, and finds himself almost shut out from the outer world by the encircling hills that bound his prospects. It was through such scenes that we drove for nine miles in order to reach the shrine of Vashishthasrama. The place is so named from the supposition that the great rishi Vashishtha had once his *asrama* here. Dismissing the story as entirely mythical, the place has charms enough to attract tourists. The temple is built of brick on the usual plan, and has no great architectural pretensions, but the situation is romantic. By it flows

a hill torrent rushing through boulders which are smoothed by the constant action of the water. The green wood with which the place is shaded, and the wild roar of the torrent, may well make it a lovely *asrama* for any one weary with the bustle of city life! The following inscription, which we copy from the anonymous author of the *Asam Bhraman* shows that the temple was built in the reign of Rajeshvara Sinha, by Dassaratha, the commander of his forces, in the Saka year 1616 or A. C. 1694.

শ্রীরামঃ।

৮৭ স্বত্তি নিষ্ঠতিমপরাক্রমঃ প্রবলবৈরিবলপ্লয় কালামনঃ
সম্মুণ্ডগৈকধাম ভবভবানীপদারবিন্দমধুকরঃ শক্রকুলকলক
সুধেন্দুঃ শ্রীশ্রীমদ্বাজেশ্বরসিংহঃ নিদেশ ইঙ্গানলাবলহিমোলিঃ তদীয়
চৱগচারণচক্রবর্ণী কলাবদ্মাতকৌত্তিঃ সমরধীরঃ পারাবারগভীর
বিদ্যাবিদ্যাতিতান্তঃকরণঃ শ্রীগোবিন্দপদাঞ্জলোদ্ধোদরঃ বাহিনী
পতিঃ শ্রীমদ্বুজছবরা ফুকণামেজ শ্রীমৎ তকুণবর ছবরা ফুকণঃ তদমুজ
শ্রীমদ্বশ্রথাভিধেয়ঃ সেনাধাক্ষে বশিষ্ঠাশ্রমশিরোপরি প্রাসাদ
মচীকরণ । তর্কনাগরসেন্দু শাকে । ১৬১৬ শাক ।

It may be mentioned here that on our way to Vashishthasram, we saw two lines of high embankment which at one time formed the defince of the town. Subsequently, we will have occasion to speak of the remains of such embankments on the northern side of the city. It appears that these lines were constructed where the hills, which formed the natural rampart of the city, failed. The position of this ancient capital was rather an exposed one from the military point of view, as it was subject to be assailed by the Bhuteas from the north, and the Kashias from the south. It was therefore in good need of such defences as the military knowledge of the time could suggest.

We have now done with the southern part of the town, but before we cross over to the northern side, we would like to loiter a little among the beautiful islands which lie on the river, in front of Gauhati. They are three in number, *viz.* :—Karmanasha, Urvashi, and Umananda. There is not much to be said about Karmanasha. A good Hindu, after he has performed his bath in the Brahmaputra, will avoid casting his eyes first on this island, or he will meet with disappointment in every undertaking he may embark upon that day. Urvashi is formed of a huge piece of igneous rock which is completely under water during the rains, and is rubbed smooth by the stream. There is little but bare rock to be seen here. On one side of the island only a few figures have been inscribed on the rock: Umananda, or the delight of Uma, is said to be formed of the dust of Mahadeva's forehead. It is the spot where, according to tradition, Mahadeva revealed the Jogini Tantra, an account of Asam, to Uma. No doubt this is a retreat well suited for an Indian Gibbon to write his history, but the outturn of the god's work appears to be very poor! The island contains a temple built in the reign of Gadadhara Sinha. There is nothing very particular about the architecture which is mostly of bricks but fragments of worked stones lie scattered about, indicating that the temple was once built of stone, which perhaps shared the same fate as the great temple of Kamakhya, in the hands of the iconoclast Kalapahar.

VII.

We will now cross over to the northern side of the town and, thanks to the local municipality, which has provided the good people of the town with an unpretending steam ferry boat, there is no difficulty in crossing. The steamer leaves the ghat near the temple of Sukreshvara, and lands us on the opposite bank near that of Ashvaklanta, almost to the west end of the town. We will, therefore, begin our account with this temple.

It is situated just on the front of the river at an elevation of about seventy feet from the ground, and is reached by two flights of stairs, if stairs they may be called, being blocks of cut stones laid across a slope. In some places one has to go up on all fours, to secure himself from an uncomfortable roll downwards! The temple is dedicated to Vishnu, and was built during the reign of Siva Sinha, in the usual style, of bricks, with a few ornamental slabs of stone placed here and there. Tradition has it that when Krishna eloped with Rukmini from her father's house in the far east of Assam, he and his men fled, as fast as they could, pursued by the angry father. Having outstripped his pursuers, and finding his horses extremely tired, he halted here to give them a little rest. This story explains the peculiar name of the temple. Indications are not wanting of the temple having once been built of stone, for many stone blocks worked and chiselled are found lying about the place.

Just in front of the temple, there is a high rocky little island which geology would say was formed by the Brahmaputra cutting through the softer material between it and the mainland. But geology is not much in favour with the local cicerones, who would give you quite a different account of the creation of this island. It is said that during the days that Krishna stopped at this place, Rukmini, a good Hindu lady as she was, used to bathe in the river every morning. But her beauty excited the curiosity of the people who would watch her bathe from the opposite shore. Rukmini could not stand the gaze of the strangers, and she complained of it to her lord. Her lord, therefore, raised that little island to shelter her from the rude eyes of the townspeople. The island is accordingly called by a name which may be translated as the "Screen Island."

Now going about two miles eastward along the road which skirts the river, we turn a little to the north to visit the temple of Rudreshvara. It was here that the king Rudra Sinha died, and the temple was built by his sons Shiva Sinha to commem-

ate the death of his father. The power of the Asam rajas reached its climax during the reign of Rudra Sinha, and one would naturally expect that a splendid monument or a mausoleum would be raised to commemorate the memory of the greatest of the kings of Asam. But seeing the modest temple before us, we could not but conclude that architecture was much neglected in Asam. The numerous fragments of old stone buildings that can be seen in the town and in the neighbourhood indicate that at an early age, architecture flourished in the valley. But the total absence of stone built edifices, or even of elaborate brick built houses of more modern times forces us to the conclusion, that the art of building not only did not make any progress, but actually deteriorated. At the present day there is not a single stone mason in the district, and even the household stone articles of ordinary use have to be brought from other places, though stone is as plentiful now in the spot as before.

The temple of Rudreshvara is a small brick built house, but slightly different in style from the ordinary temples. It is raised on a plinth, and the plinth is vaulted so that a person can walk round the temple underneath the vaulted plinth. The following inscription we found at the gate of the temple.

৮৭ শ্রীগোরীশ পদার বিন্দমধুপোকাপেণ কামোপমোনীতৌ
বাক্পতি রোজস। স্তুপতি ভূ'লোকে কল্পক্রমঃ। ইন্দুপ্রায়বশা বভুব
ভূবনে ভূপালচূড়ামণিধিরো বীরগণাগ্নীক্ষণমণিঃ শ্রীকৃষ্ণসংহোনৃপঃ॥
তৎপুত্রঃ প্রতত প্রতাপ তপনোদীনোঘমীনোদধিঃ পুণ্যাঙ্গি নৃপবৃন্দ
বন্দিত পদবন্দার বিন্দঃ স্মৃধীঃ। কৌর্ত্যানিন্দিত শারদেন্দুরভবৎ^১
কৃষ্ণ দর্পাপহো কৃপেণেহ প্রমত সিংহনৃপতি ভূ'মণ্ডলাধুলঃ॥
তত্ত্বা দেশ বশাং শুধাংশুশসঃ সাম্যো দয়া সিদ্ধনা বীর শ্রীতকৃগান্তি
শব্দ ছবরা নাহা অহামত্ত্বিলা প্রাকারোহমকারি কাহুত্তিরলং ধারেণ

শাকংজনৈঃ শাকে বেদহস্তালিপাদধরণে কুর্জেশ্বরস্তালয়ে ।

১৬৭৮ || • ||

This inscription shows that the wall round the temple was built in the Saka year 1674, or A. C. 1752.

VIII.

RETURNING from Rudreshvara and resuming the road along the river, we have to proceed only a short distance in order to reach a little rest house built on a little mound by the Public Works Department. The bungalow commands a beautiful prospect. On the south, is the broad Brahmaputra with its sand banks and beautiful little islands ; beyond it, lies the quiet little town of South Gauhati stretching from the Navagraha temple to the Nilachala hill. Further to the south, can be seen the waving hills of the Kamrup district, far as the eye can reach. Northward, the view is almost as splendid. Wave after wave of hills almost encircle the horizon, while the verdant plain reposes below and relieves the monotony of the mountain scenery. In old days, however, these lovely scenes did not enjoy the quiet repose which they do now. The Bhuteas beyond the hills would often come in foraging expeditions, plundering and burning villages, lifting cattle, and carrying men and women to their mountain fastnesses. The place where the rest house stands is peculiarly favourable to watch the movements of these highland robbers. The wide open plain that lies between the encircling hills and the river would show the approach of an enemy from a distance. The encircling hills were, as it were, a natural defence, save in one place, where there is a gap of about thirty miles. This gap was lined by an embankment raised by the Assam rajas, similar to what we saw in the southern part of the town on our way to Vashishthasram.

The position of the Public Works Department bungalow being such as we have described, it would not be unreasonable

to suppose that this spot was, in old days, occupied by some edifice, to serve as a watch tower, or an outpost, to keep a look-out on the enemies. At any rate there can be no doubt that the place was once occupied by some building of consequence. There are the remains of an arch still visible in the mound choked up with *debris*. We could not ascertain whether the place was ever excavated and searched as it should have been. It appears likely that, were the passage cleared beneath the ruined arch, it would lead to a chamber within. There are also a few pieces of chiselled and sculptured stones lying about, which are evidently the remains of an old building. In one of the former we read the following inscription :—

শীতে তরলি তাপেন গীঘে লোহিত্য বাযুনা স্মৃথদ্ব্যাখিল লোকানাঃ
মণ্ডপে শঙ্কুভারতঃ

It is clear from this fragmentary sentence, that there was something like a pavilion in which many people enjoyed the warmth of the sun in winter, and the breeze of the Brahmaputra in summer.

Leaving the quiet little bungalow and proceeding for about a mile along the riverside road, we come to another temple called the Munikanyesvara, built in the reign of Rujeshvara Sinha. It is situated in a beautiful place, where a little hill stream joins the Brahmaputra. The temple is in a very dilapidated state, its enclosure walls have fallen down in many places, and the whole thing is fast crumbling to pieces. The plinth of the temple is made of stone while, the edifice above, is of bricks ; a few stone slabs containing figures are placed here and there, as ornaments.

We will now take one excursion from North Gauhati, as we did from the south, and visit the temple at Haju. We must therefore return to the Ashvaklanta ghat from which Haju is fifteen miles distant by road, and six miles, as the crow flies. The way, though long, lies through beautiful hills and valleys, sometimes skirting the Brahmaputra, and sometimes passing

through woods or winding along a hill, and again running over a plain. A journey through this district is always pleasant. We have not to proceed long, when we come to the place of the Dhingia Gossains. They once made themselves famous in history, and the Asam rajas had to invoke their aid against another body of prelates who had risen in rebellion against the secular authority. But their sun has set, and the collection of a few huts, in which their descendants now live, marks the place of those once powerful church dignitaries !

Proceeding about two miles further, we find that the hills which had hitherto flanked us to the west, disappear, and the broad Brahmaputra appears in view. However much this change in the scenery may be liked by a modern tourist, the gap of about three miles from here to the next series of hills was evidently disliked by the military authorities of old, and we accordingly find a high embankment raised to protect the country from any inroads that might be made from the river. This rampart of earthworks, as it now stands, is about thirty feet above the level of the adjacent land, and perhaps forms a part of the line which was raised all around the city whenever the natural rampart of the hills failed.

We can now proceed, without further halt, till we reach the village of Haju. There are several temples in this place, but the most interesting is the one dedicated to Vishnu, under the name of Hayagriba. It was originally a Buddhist shrine, but converted into a Hindu temple when Hinduism supplanted Buddhism. It is still largely frequented by the Bhuteas though it has long ceased to be a Buddhist shrine. The temple is situated on a small height of about seventy feet, and is reached by a flight of stairs made of stone. It is built partly of stone and partly of brick. The base is ornamented with a long series of figures of elephants cut out of rock, many of which have been mutilated by Kalapahar. This temple is more imposing than any we have hitherto seen in the district, but it

was not originally the work of the Asam rajas, being raised by one of the ancient kings of Kuch Behar, when this part of the country formed a part of the possessions of the sovereigns of Kuch Behar. Inside the temple it is pitch dark, and it is only by the help of lamps that the gods can be seen. They are three in number, the principal one being a figure possessing the face of a horse, and hence the name 'Hayagriba'. There is a beautiful tank just at the foot of the temple, and what is unique in Asam, there is a band of dancing girls attached to the temple.

IX

We saw three inscriptions in the temple of Hayagriba, at Haju. The first and the most important one we copy from the *Asam Brahmana*.

শ্রীমৎ শ্রীবিশ্বসিংহঃ ক্ষতিপতিরভবত্তৎ স্মৃতঃ ধ্যাতকীর্তিঃ ।
 শ্রীমৎ শ্রীমলদেবো নৃপতিরতিমতিনিজিতারাতিজাতিঃ ॥
 গাঙ্গীর্থৈদার্য শৌর্যপ্রথিত পৃথুষশোধৰ্মকশ্চাবদাতঃ ।
 শ্রীমৎ শুক্লধরজাত্যেন বাজনি তদমুজো যদশেহশ্রেষ্ঠদেশঃ ॥
 সাক্ষাদ্বাবপুষ্টবো দিশিদিশি প্রথ্যাতকীর্তিভ্রজঃ ।
 হস্তাপুণ্যজনশ্চ যো বিধিবশাং যঃ কামরূপেশ্বরঃ ॥
 যো যো বাখিগলোকশোকদহনজালাবলীবারিদঃ ।
 শ্রীমৎ শ্রীরঘূদেবভূপতিরভূৎ শুক্লধরস্যোরসঃ ॥
 তস্মাশেষজন প্রসাদ অনকঃ শ্রীকৃষ্ণপাদার্জকে ।
 তৃপঃ প্রাপ্তবয়াঃ গদাধরকৃতী প্রাসাদরঞ্জং ব্যাধাং ।
 যণ্যাধ্যান গিরোহুরামুররিপো রত্নাঙ্গমানাম্পদঃ ।
 আকে বাগবিয়ভিত্তিশুগণিবয়াঃ কাকঃ স্বয়ং শ্রীধরঃ ॥ ১৫০৫ শক ।

The above is interesting as giving a genealogy of the king who raised the temple. First we have Bishva Sinha. He was



succeeded by his son Malladeva, then by his brother Sukla dhadja, and then by Raghudeva who is said to have built the temple in the Saka year 1505, A. C. 1580. But if this temple was a Buddhist shrine, and there is evidence to show that it was, we can only conclude that king Raghudeva simply repaired the old Buddhist building and converted it into a Hindu temple. Another point needs be mentioned. It is stated in the inscription that the kings therein named were the rulers of Kamrup, whereas other accounts say that the temple was built by one of the kings of Kuch Behar. Perhaps these sovereigns exercised authority over a tract of country that included both Kamrup and Kuch Behar. However this is a point for antiquarians to decide.

The second inscription is put in what is called the Rashlila tower, where the god is removed during the Dolejatra festival. It is as follows :—

ওঁ শ্রষ্টা শ্রীদেবাদিদেব সুরাম্বুরবন্দিতচরণ হয়ামূর মঙ্গল
মর্দন নানাগীতনৃতাবাদ্যমঙ্গল প্রীত্যুৎসবানন্দ শ্রীশ্রীহয়গ্রীব মাধব
দোলনাদোলন বিনোদ বিলাসায় দান বিতরণ দধ্যক্ষিকর্ণেপম
সমরবিজয়ী নৃপনিকরচূড়ামণি ঘর্গেশবংশাবতঃসংশ্রীপ্রমত্ত সিংহ
মহারাজাধিরাজাজ্ঞা শ্রীমাধবচরণপরামুণ শ্রীতরুণ হুবরা বৃহৎ^৩
ফুকনেন মণিকুটগিরো ফল্লুৎসব দোলোয়মকারি পক্ষ মুনির
সাত্ত্বিকরণে শাকে ১৬৭২ ॥

It will be seen that this portion of the temple was built in the saka year 1672, A.C. 1747 under the orders of king Pramatta Sinha, by the Bar Phukan, Taruna Duvara.

The third inscription has been copied by a friend ; it is neither in the Sanskrit nor in the Asamese language.

We cannot leave this place without mentioning the remains of a Mahomedan tomb on an adjoining hill known by the name of Poanicca. Want of time prevented us from climbing the

hill and paying a visit to the shrine, and we contented ourselves with looking on the steeple of the mosque from below the hill. The tomb is raised over the remains of some Mahomedan saint who lived so holy a life that it was not thought proper to bury him in the ordinary burial ground. A *pooa* weight of soil was brought from Mecca to consecrate the ground in which he was buried, and hence the peculiar name of the hill.

We have now noted a few of the remains of antiquity which we had the pleasure of seeing during a short sojourn in the district. They are in our opinion interesting enough to deserve the attention of antiquarians. Before we conclude we would invite the attention of the Government of Asam to the absence of an antiquarian museum in the province. We frequently had occasion to notice in these pages the existence of many beautiful pieces of stone which lie scattered about at Gouhati. Many such have no doubt already disappeared ; and many are fast disappearing. It is no doubt the duty of Government to preserve the relics of the past, a duty which has been acknowledged by the Government of India in making liberal grants not only for the inspection of old ruins, but for their preservation. A very small grant will meet the requirements of Asam. A tolerably large bungalow at Gouhati and a small staff will be sufficient to rescue from oblivion many interesting fragments of stone which have a story to tell to all intelligent visitors, of the art and history of the times gone by, and will be the means of instruction to the people. We hope our suggestion to establish an antiquarian museum at Gouhati will be duly considered by the Government of Asam.

We have another suggestion to make to Government. One travelling in this country, wandering among the ruins of the by-gone days, and reading its old history is struck with the wretched condition in which the descendants of the sovereigns, who once owned these realms and reared these works, now live. A collection of a few huts accommodate the sons of those to

whom the whole valley was at one time scarcely large enough ! Not only an occasional traveller in these parts, but the people no doubt keenly feel the neglect to which the descendants of kings have been allowed to fall. They had their time, and a glorious time too, and they maintained their independence for many a long year against the overwhelming power of the Mahomedans. But now that the British have succeeded them in their extensive dominions, the British can well afford to be generous towards them. A small brick-built house will afford them a decent shelter. A favour—trifling as this—will, we are sure, be very much appreciated by the people, and will not be unworthy of the civilised power that now rules over India.



